

Gossip About Plays, Players and Playhouses

SOCIOLOGICAL, without being specifically so, and socialistic, without being perniciously so, this is the state of the play that has made the most of the furor on the American stage during the last two seasons. After a long period of boot-lick and at times almost nauseating discussion of the sex question, the dramatists are turning to the industrial and social relations for theme. No matter what the players may think they have achieved, nothing that is absolutely vital has as yet been accomplished by them. The attack has been tentative, or, at least, perfunctory. The plays that are typical of the class and the ones that are most talked of in press and in conversation, have evolved apathy, but what might have been discovered as the hour's perusal of the daily papers, and have fallen as short of proposing an adequate remedy as did their predecessors that dealt solely with the sex question. Even the discussion as carried on so far has been of little use, for it has not been entered into vigorously at any point, nor has the attack on any of the abuses complained of been directed with sufficient force to entitle it to respect as being greater than a mere protest.

When Mr. Charles Klein's "The Lion and the Mouse" was offered to the public last season, it was hailed as a seething arrangement of the money power as represented in the person of one of its leading characters. The personality of a prominent American of wealth was thinly veiled behind Mr. Klein's loosely drawn caricature of a man of commanding wealth, and as we have seen, the play was a failure. The drama, its success was immediate and its popularity widespread. It is still an immensely popular play, and nightly wins the plaudits of excited audiences in one or the other of the cities of the land. This can only be accounted for on the basis that we deeply love to see pummeled, orally or manually, the person to whom we have an aversion, no matter on what ground it may be founded. In this case the rich man who is thought to have been taken as a model for the play, is not only a model for his fellow countrymen, and they generally rejoice to see him punished, if only in a play. Mr. Klein has presented no new fact, has offered no new arguments. He does not even present fundamental conditions. His phrases are sentimental, and his conclusions inconsequential, just as the diarrhea he launches through the poor girl's mouth at the rich man's head are platitudinous and trite. As has been pointed out in this department at another time, the Nemesis in "The Lion and the Mouse" is not actuated by a desire to right any public wrong, but merely seeks redress for private grievances. It can not be forgotten that Shirley Rosemore was moved by a sense of injustice visited on her dear father, Judge Rosemore, who had been crushed by John Burkett Ryder. The same judge had taken a tip from Mr. Ryder, and, relying on the distastefulness of the head money devil, had placed his fortune in a certain stock. When the judge rendered a decision that was unfavorable to the Ryder person, that instant his stock was sent to nothing at all and he was wiped out. Then, after the latest power in Shirley's virgin bosom, and forth she went, a Jean d'New York, to do justice with the center of all evils from which the business and social world suffer. She saved her father and married the man who had humbled him. But it is not recorded that at any time or place John Burkett Ryder was induced to abandon his pursuit of other people's money, save in that he allowed Judge Rosemore to continue to feed the federal district bench. And the thinking folk who waited for the final curtain unanimously said "Rats!"

This season Mr. Klein has offered us another and "deeper" study along the same line in "Daughters of Men." One of these girls is a poor and seemingly honest working lassie. The other comes from the very top of the upper crust. They both fall in love with the same man, and in the course of their contact with each other spout a great deal of nothing about the conditions and relations, and the fundamental principles, and the rights, and privileges, and all that sort of thing. In the great climactic scene, where the poor girl thinks she has her more fortunate rival in a corner and undertakes to expose her, the rich young woman merely accepts the situation with that fine moral courage that is inherent to every well trained and properly balanced mind, and thus defeats her. Just what triumph for society is concealed in this situation can scarcely be divined. It is axiomatic that a well nurtured and educated individual has a psychic advantage over one not so favored, and there is nothing remarkable in a rich girl wanting to marry a poor man. Mr. Klein has only emphasized the handicap the poor girl has to accept when she enters into competition with a rich one, whether the contest be for love or for something else. He of course uses as a background the disparity in the physical surroundings of the rich and poor. But he offers no new thought, and proves no new point.

Another of the plays of the season, heralded as dealing with problems vital to the American people, is "The Man of the Hour." In which Mr. George Broadhurst has broadly outlined a couple of New York's bosses, and the sort of mayor Mr. McClelland might be if he were not another sort. This, too, has merely transferred from the newspaper columns to the spotlight conditions that have been familiar to the public by dint of persistent publication. Mr. Broadhurst plays one boss against the other, and makes his mayor act like an honest man at a time when it is expedient for him to do so. It is all very nice as a play, but it proposes nothing beyond the world-old proposition that "honesty is the best policy." It does

not say how honesty in public office is to be secured, nor does it tell how political bosses are to be driven out when they have made up their minds to pull off a coup. It does tell how the public is betrayed by those who are trusted, but this is hardly a novelty. As an illustration of applied politics it may be effective, but not more so than the columns of any live daily newspaper.

Straying a little further afield, but keeping within the pale of sociology, Prof. Moody's "Great Divide" tackles a more difficult and abstruse phase of the topic. What a pity he couldn't trust his play to the New York public until its original and more descriptive title of "The Sabine Woman." Surely there are enough people in New York familiar with Roman history to have made the application plain to the rest of the Gothamites. But Prof. Moody devotes his time to trying to prove that a woman may learn to love the man who has ravished her, just why this question should have been obtruded is hardly apparent. Even were it answered decisively, no matter which way, it would not serve any useful purpose. The affirmative would not render the crime more popular, nor would the negative make it more abhorrent. It seems to be presented for much the same purpose as was the famous debate of the German monks as to the exact number of souls that could find standing room on the point of a fine needle. It is not just now recalled what figure the monks finally arrived at as being the correct one, but it is morally certain that if the test were made tomorrow, and a selection made, the record could be increased. Prof. Moody's excursion into savagery for a theme is not likely to add anything to the sum total of human wisdom. Some tribes there still be where courtesy is carried on by means of a blood feud, and among these the husband is seldom beloved by his wife, and the wife is seldom beloved by her husband. It is just barely possible that in the case of his Sabine woman there was a reversion to type, but even this is in conformity to accepted teaching. As a contribution to sociology, the play is no more important than either of the Klein or the Broadhurst productions, no matter how much it may excel as mere literature.

Rev. Thomas J. Dixon's treatment of the so-called race problem is characteristic. He goes to a bygone day for his theme, and by induction argues that conditions that prevailed in the south during the latter sixties are still dominant. His argument is unsound, for the reason that it is palpably a defense, and being such, is not free from partisan bias. "The Clansman" is interesting as a play, but it is not a useful contribution to the literature of the modern sociological trend.

From Holland comes a play which, because it does not deal with fundamentals, is probably more vital than either of the American productions. "The Good Hope," offered recently in New York by Ellen Terry, is a translation from the Dutch of Herman Heijermans. It is a pitiful tale of the sudden life of the fishermen of Holland. Its principal character is an old woman who has seen her father, brothers and husband swallowed up by the sea, and is now called upon to see her young fellow. One of these boys, a fine young fellow, has been dismissed from the navy in disgrace because he struck an officer who had insulted the girl he hopes to marry. He returns from prison and ship on the Good Hope to earn money that he may marry his sweetheart, who is also his cousin. The younger brother has a congenial horror for the sea, but is driven aboard the same vessel by his mother, who insists that he shall take his part in life and aid in earning the living. The Good Hope is a rotten hulk, a floating coffin, and is overwhelmed in a storm. During the storm the women folk gather around a fire in the hut of Klerke, played by Mrs. Mary Hill, and listen to the roar of the elements that sounds the doom of those on the Good Hope. Klerke recalls that while she was driving her younger son to sea she had neglected to keep an appointment with the elder, which was to signify that she had forgiven him for his conduct and for a fiery speech in which he declares his manhood and his rights. The thought comes to her that her two sons, the last she has to offer, are sucked down by the sea, the elder thinking her hard and unforgiving, the younger looking upon her as having driven him to his death. It is a sermon and a picture of life among the lowly that might be softened by very slight changes. How utterly dull and hopeless the existence of its leading characters is made plain, while the careless selfishness and avarice of those who have a large degree of wealth with the conditions is vigorously portrayed. The greed of the shipowner is responsible for the tributes of lives.

All this agitation suggests that the altruistic movement is taking on a concrete form. While the case is presented in a tentative and not especially convincing way, enough is offered to start thought along lines that must eventually converge somewhere near the truth. Thus the apparently useless play becomes useful, and Klein and Broadhurst, Moody and Heijermans may be the forerunners of a school of dramatists who are to aid other agencies in bringing about reforms that are needed. Economists are agreed that the problem of production is solved; that the needs of mankind may be daily satisfied, and that the accumulation of wealth as represented by the surpluses of labor is assured. The question of distribution is now the point of attack. The discussion of the various and varying aspects of life at the theater help to direct us to a conclusion just as certainly as do the academic disquisitions of the schools. More virile and effective debate is likely to follow these pioneer efforts and from the stage

some pertinent lessons may yet be taught. This is the real hope that has been aroused by the play mentioned and others of their ilk. Not in vain the future beckons. Forward, forward let us range. Let the great world gain forever down the ringing grooves of change.

Clansmen Events.
The original company and production of "The Clansman" will be seen at the Boyd theater Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, and a matinee on Wednesday. This is the Ku Klux Klan play that turned the country upside down last year with its handling of the problem. The hero of the "Clansman" is a young and gallant leader of the Ku Klux Klan. Opposed to him are an ambitious misanthrope and a white abolitionist from Pennsylvania, whose daughter the young white man seeks in marriage. The first act shows the young man's determination to rule by terror down a proclamation that promised bayonets to protect marriages between whites and blacks, and the second act shows the sale of his ancestral home to satisfy taxes levied by the negroes and carpetbaggers.

In the third act the Ku Klux Klan vote the death of a black ruffian who has frightened a young girl to leaping to her death over a precipice. The last act shows the mulatto Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina confronting the abolitionist, his friend and protector, with a demand for the hand of the latter's daughter. The effect is a large circle of confusion, and the promiscuous author forbids him ever to approach his home again, and goads the mulatto to such a fury that only the arrival of the Ku Klux Klan saves the old man and his daughter.

"Bergant Kitty" is recalled as one of the most delightful of recent light opera. It is the story of a young woman who is completely involved in the barracks, and is compelled to don male attire for her own protection. She deceives the commandant and even her own affianced lover, and leads the soldiers a merry chase, but finally attracts herself and the others involved among the cleverest balancers and jugglers ever brought from Japan. Lavinia De Witt, the cornet virtuoso, the Rotaries, said to be exceptionally good on the slack wire and as acrobats, and new kindred picture and song complete a bill calculated to create a nice Orpheum standard of entertainment.

On Friday, March 1, the following members of the Nebraska Wesleyan university conservatory of music faculty will give their second annual recital at the First Methodist Episcopal church. Messrs. Vernon Spencer, Clemens Moxley, Edmund Forstet and Mrs. Lillian Dobbs Helms, assisted by Marie Sloan. It will be remembered on the occasion of their recital last year the largest church was not able to accommodate the audience, and a great number are looking forward to an anticipation to this second concert. The program will be as follows:
Allergo Vivace ("Concerto Op. 21, F minor").....Chopin
Cavatina (from "The Jewess").....Halevy
Allegro de Concerto.....Bazini
Soprano Solo (new in movement).....Mr. Edmund Forstet
Polonaise (from "Mignon").....Thomas Mrs. Lillian Dobbs Helms

Music and Musical Notes

THIS winter the country seems to have gone opera mad. In New York the Metropolitan and the Manhattan are crowded to the roofs for every performance. Now in Chicago at the Auditorium, Nordica and Alice Neilson, together with the new Spanish tenor, are delighting large audiences. We are to have a very minute season here in Omaha, on April 2. A matinee and evening performance will be given, (Coursed company) "La Boheme" with Caruso and Benoit, and "The Bohemian Girl" with chosen. A good deal has been said about a production of "Salome," but unless I am vastly mistaken this work will not be put on again in this country until a few changes have been made in its vivid coloring. The real hard-pan truth of the matter is that Olive Fremstad out-Salomes Salome. The people who heard and saw her would gladly, like Herod, have hung themselves over the backs of their chairs, with their cloaks about their heads. One can read the Oscar Wilde text without undue excitement, neither at the thought of the two together, with the volcanic temperament, and the physical beauty of Fremstad to illumine the whole, form a sensation not often vouchsafed to weary mortals. It is good to have gone through once. That is enough, Fremstad is a play, and without compromise, and she does indeed. The only wonder in my mind is how either Parsifal or John The Baptist ever escaped with their moral scalp locks.

The music of "Salome" is like a great impressionist picture; the paint laid on in splashes with a palette. Viewed closely many parts are ugly, but at a distance, with the whole blended together, the effect is actually interesting and in spots very beautiful. At any rate, this decadent phase of our modern life is one to be reckoned with. Many good things develop through evil. Strauss is yet a young man. His genius seems to be seething. Ugliness is not invariably the result of the artist's peevishness; he may at last come to his own. He is now at work on another opera, for which the musical world is waiting with bated breath. Will it be a monstrosity or a work of genuine beauty?

It is laughable to read in the papers and music journals what a great big man Hammerstein is and how he and his opera house are the howling success of the New York season. It is true they have been successful. The opera at the Metropolitan are beautifully put on, and several of the singers are very fine, but the venture has affected the patronage and business success of the Metropolitan not one iota. It sells along its conservative way, a blue-blooded aristocrat, in no need or sensational advertising, the atmosphere of the two houses is most amazingly different.

The Manhattan is a gaudy, overdecorated place, filled with strange, fat-be-diamonded women, fresh from the marcel-wave art; and also many dark, foreign looking men. However, one forgets them all when Bonie comes out. Here is an artist, supreme, almost without flaw. I heard a special presentation of "Rigoletto." In this role he did the most exquisite work. Melba was the Gilda, but her star paled beside this tenor. She is the same old Melba. She cut the atmosphere of the opera, "wouldn't be carried on the stage in a bag" to be discovered and mourned over by her father. Poor Ancona sang his lament to a very palpable case of straw at the front of the stage. Nellie had gone home—was not present to receive any recalls. On that evening, however, 80 carriages radiated for blocks about the Manhattan. Her drawing power is still potent.

The Wind Marie Sloan.
Toreador Song MacDowell
Legend Wieniawski
Hungarian Dance No. 8 Brahms-Joachim
Three Songs from "Bohème" Wagner
(a) Rising Fairies Reger
(b) In Snowy Weather.
(c) My Lad Miss Helms
Minuet, E-major Campbell-Tipton
In the Deep Forest MacDowell
Wedding Day at Tyrol Grieg
Mr. Spencer.
*Orchestral parts on pipe organ.

Gossip from Stangeland.
The company which is to support Law-Alton D'Ostater, his new play, "Lord Duncaster," includes Josephine Drake, Helen Robertson, Ida M. Darling, Margaret Dale, Howard Percy, Thomas W. Wain, Sydney Mather, Harry Dodd, Emerson Mack, Lyler Chambers and Harold Weston. Mr. D'Ostater's part is said to be somewhat "more heroic."

The announcement that Marie Dero is to be starred in "The Moral of Marcus" recalls the fact that this was the play produced by Mr. Houghier at the Garrick theater in London, from which the critics were debarred on the opening night. As will be remembered by those familiar with the controversy that followed Mr. Houghier's subsequent wrote an apology for his action, asking that the play be reviewed in justice to the actors and actresses. The play is a dramatization by W. J. Locke of his novel, "The Moral of Marcus Dero," and has enjoyed a long London run.

Omaha people will regret very much the change from the Woodward stock company that takes Miss Mary Hill to Kansas City. Miss Hill has been one of the most successful and popular members of the company during the time she has been with it, and she was well known here in Omaha. She was well known here already, through her work with the summer stock at the Burwood, where she has greatly increased her circle of friends. She goes to the Woodward stock company at Auditorium in Kansas City, where her husband, Harry Long, is stage director.

It has become known that Edwin Milton Royle submitted his first revision of "The Man of the Hour" to the American National theater, and that all negotiations will be at an end and that Mr. Dillingham will have to find either another dramatist or "Article Forty-Five" or an entirely new play for Mrs. Leslie Carter to make her debut under his management. Mr. Dillingham recently asserted that, though he had ordered no other version of "Article Forty-Five," he had received no less than five plays based on the old drama, all written purely on speculation after the difference of himself and Royle came into court. Mr. Royle obtained an injunction restraining the presentation of the ground that his manuscript had been altered to its detriment. At Mr. Royle's trial, said Mrs. Royle, "if Mr. Dillingham does not wish to present the manuscript as Mr. Royle has now revised it, my husband is looking forward to the advancement to this second concert. The program will be as follows:

During an incidental talk with a party of diners at the Lamb's club a few nights ago, a layman, who was deferentially drifting into the "shop talk" of the actor-conrades, asked Mr. William Lackaye his opinion of present stage conditions, and if, in the belief, there was hope for the future of the American drama? "Hope," answered Mr. Lackaye. "Indeed, I do believe there are great hopes for the future of the American drama," he said. "The Man of the Hour," which expounds a moral lesson from an exposition of American freemasonry and the concentration of wealth, has passed its five hundredth night, and is a lively portrait of corruption and graft in American politics. "The Man of the Hour" is one of the most popular plays ever produced in New York. The director of the American National theater, Herr Conrad, is a German; Charles Klein, author of "The Lion and the Mouse," and George Broadhurst, who wrote "The Man of the Hour," two typically American conditions, are Englishmen. The play is a fine outlook for the American drama, so long as we maintain our friendly relations with England and Germany."

The following is a list of Richard Mansfield's roles, prepared by late press representative to prove the actor's "cosmopolitanization." Of Frenchmen there have been three—Barnum, three—Barnum, Monsieur, eloquent Cyrano de Bergerac, exquisite Beauchamp and altruistic Alceste; German, three—Barnum, Prince Karl, musically Courvoisier, naive Karl Heinrich, and Shaw's Swale near German, Captain Blumhilde; of Romans, poetic Brutus and brutal Nero; of Englishmen, five—English Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, blue Beau Brummel, bloody King Richard III, climbing Tithelbat Timonius, courtly King Henry VIII, and the English Rodion the Student; of Spaniards, two—amorous Don Juan and married Don Carlos; of Jews, one—revengeful Shylock. The boys in this list are Prince Karl, Tithelbat Timonius, Don Juan, Dudgeon, Courvoisier, Karl, Heinrich, King Henry and Don Carlos. The middle-aged men are Jekyll and Hyde, Beau Brummel, Nero, Tithelbat Timonius, Shylock, and Rodion, Cyrano, Rodion, Beauchamp and Alceste. The old men are Cyrano, Shylock, and Tithelbat Timonius. King Richard III and Poor Gylt begin as boys and follow the course of the character's career to maturity, exhibiting in one evening the artist's powers of protean transition.

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